

**UNION CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
COMMON MINISTRY
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF AUGUST 13, 2020**

Present:

Absent:

Pastors	Bridget Flad Daniels Jon Pahl		
Moderator	Sandy Polarek		
Vice Moderator	Heather Collins		
Treasurer	Jeff Gibson		
Clerk	Gail Hohenstein		
Education	Nancy Gibson		
Gifts & Memorials		Nicole Polarek Phil Enscoe	
Inreach & Membership		Denise Olson	
Outreach	Christie Reese	Achim Siefert	
Stewardship	Clay Reese		
Worship	Betty Bienash		
Communications Coordinator		Avonelle Weist	
Guest(s)			

Meeting held via Zoom.

Moderator Sandy Polarek called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

Additions to the Agenda:

Congregational Joys and Concerns: Joys and concerns were shared.

Gathering Prayer: Bridget shared a poem.

Open Forum: None.

Ministers' Reports: Jon shared that things are pretty much on track with Education and Outreach. The "Wear the Mask" song for this weekend is in the works.

Bridget shared the decision to not have the all-church retreat this September. Our deposit was donated to Moon Beach. Her proposal to re-name the retreat the Dick Lathrop Memorial Retreat was met with approval. Lou Norsetter will begin working on the nominating process for this year. Heather has stepped off that team because of other commitments; please let Bridget know if we have ideas for others who might be good for the nominating team. Ideally team member would have a good idea of the structures and needs of church and a good grasp church membership. The pledge campaign team is beginning its work. They have a couple of new voices but could use some additional folks. Again, let Bridget know if you have suggestions. Larry Rose will do an audit of the books for the year. Bridget noted her need for additional expertise on anti-racism issues, and was glad to find an excellent on-line course entitled "How to Lead when You Don't Know Where You Are Going" which she is participating in for her continuing ed. Sandy and Bridget have decided to convene a situational support committee relative to the sex offender policy. Stacie Christian and Kevin Sheier will be working with Bridget on the committee.

Clerk's Report

Approval of the minutes for the regular meetings of July 11 were approved. (Heather/Christie)

Treasurer's Report

Jeff distributed the regular financial report (attached). The report was accepted. (Betty/Clay)

New Business

- Mayflower Closing: Mayflower has announced it will close after its 65 years. Teachers will remove their personal items and they will gift the rest of the furniture, etc. to the Church. Bridget recommends we do some concerted strategic thinking about how to next use that space. On The Mark and Faith Formation may use the spaces in the interim, but there will be some strategizing about the future uses of those spaces.
- Safe Church: Jon reported two Safe Church sessions have been scheduled. They will focus on in-person as well as on-line safety. Jon will share the materials with Common Ministry when they are completed.

Continuing Business

- Reopening the Building Task Force Updates:
 - Outside Use: Brain Center is still working virtually. On The Mark is following the set protocols. There are a couple of organizations which traditionally use our facility for fall events which will need to be addressed.
 - Worship: This team has meeting weekly and they are beginning to make a great deal of progress. 10 Commandments of In-Person Worship reviewed and discussed. (See attached.) 5 households participated in listening sessions in regard to resuming ministry with children and youth, and the overwhelming request was for communication, which is the Task Force's next priority. They would also like resources for in-home guided faith formation. When we begin Sunday services in person, Communion will be either with pre-packaged elements or members may bring their own elements. After discussion, the proposed Baptismal Policy (attached) was approved. (Heather/Jeff)
 - Technology: Clay described the equipment recommended to stream services live. Approval to purchase this equipment was given at the last meeting. Estimated cost is \$6,925.00. Given ordering/installation time we should anticipate that it will not be operational until early October. There is a generous gift to cover this expense. Thank you to the generous donor!
- Priorities & Budget Report: Heather had distributed the proposal to CM. (Attached). This has been almost a 6- month process. It has encompassed a lot of thought and prayer time. After review, Jon shared some remarks and discussed continued in Jon's absence. Motion to approve recommendation #4 was approved (Gail/Nancy). Recommendations #2 and #3 were sent back to Committee for further consideration with much gratitude of the work that has and will be done.

Ministry Reports (unless covered in Ministry meeting minutes)

EDUCATION

Education is planning for virtual Faith Formation. Shine curriculum, which has virtual components, has been ordered. It includes a weekly short recording of story and lesson and an activity. We are pretty well set with teachers. Jon will put together the annual Faith Formation registration materials and will write an email blast. Students will also be sent the weekly recording of the church service.

GIFTS & MEMORIALS

No Report.

MEMBERSHIP & INREACH

Folks who signed in as visitors from September through March and everyone who we have contact info for who have been connecting with us virtually since March will be contacted regarding an October new member class. New donors will be added to that effort. Part of these conversations will be inquiring whether prospective members would participate if these sessions are in-person or virtual.

OUTREACH

No additions to minutes. Winnie is adding a line for the Blessing Box for on-line giving.

STEWARDSHIP

Clay has been looking at sanitization/air treatment equipment. Air purifiers improve air quality but do not eliminate all COVID risk, however they are a good idea since our heating system does not move air. Stewardship is still researching information on a fogger or other means to disinfect larger spaces. Mark Smith has been replacing many light bulbs and fixtures. Cathy Putman is looking to recruit members to an ad hoc committee to re-vamp the Biblical Garden.

WORSHIP

No additions to minutes. They are looking for creative minds and ideas for our Christmas Eve service in the event that we are still having virtual or limited-attendance services. Sandy added she has heard our on-line services are well received and far above those of other churches. Christie also asked that we try to come up with creative ideas for the pageant and that she would be willing to help.

Communications: No Report.

JOSHUA Report:

Jeff shared that JOSHUA is working on homelessness/eviction issues, which are becoming a more widespread issue that Green Bay may not be prepared to handle. They are encouraging people to read Evicted. Jeff will write the lead article Sept 6 for the email blast to communicate the concerns with the congregation and encourage advocacy.

GB Correctional Institution has had an increase from 4 to 25 inmates with COVID-19, and is asking for prayers for inmates and staff. The Governor has released (with ankle monitors) several thousand nonviolent inmates. There are many people waiting for parole and a large number of very elderly prisoners who could be returned to their families. Public actions are being coordinated through WISDOM. Jon advocated some public action locally.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was approved (Jeff/Nancy). After prayer, the meeting was adjourned at 9:07p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Hohenstein
Clerk

Next meeting: September 10, 2020 – 6:00 p.m. – via Zoom

Future Schedule:

Common Ministry Meetings	Gathering Prayer	Treats
September 10	Betty	Gail
October 8		Christie/Clay
November 12		Nancy
December 10		Heather
January 14		Bridget

**Union Congregational UCC
Treasurer's Report
July 2020**

<u>Income</u>	<u>2020 Actual</u>	<u>2020 Budgeted</u>	<u>2019 Actual</u>
January	\$80,947	\$91,733	\$103,568
February	23,891	19,039	12,498
March	29,554	21,141	19,535
April	47,819	32,925	30,012
May	22,912	34,399	29,812
June	33,698	16,889	14,696
July	33,623	17,858	14,236
August	-	-	-
September	-	-	-
October	-	-	-
November	-	-	-
December	-	-	-
Total	\$272,444	\$233,984	\$224,357
 G&M Cont.	 \$29,167	 \$29,167	 \$29,167
 Total Revenue	 \$301,611	 \$263,151	 \$253,524
 PPP	 \$77,833		
 Revenue w/PPP	 \$379,444		
 <u>Expenses</u>	 <u>(thru July 31)</u>		
Actual:	\$281,857		
Budget:	\$303,056		
Last Year:	\$297,029		

Comments:

Pledge plus Non-pledge income through July exceeds our budgeted estimate by approximately \$47,000 and overall General Fund revenue exceeds our estimates by \$38,000, an increase of \$14,000 over last month. Declines in Loose Plate, Church School, Prior Year Pledges and Room Rentals account for the \$9,000 difference. Expenses are about \$21,000 below expected for the YTD. For the year Building Maintenance expenses are about \$1,500 under our estimate. These figures do not include the positive impact of the PPP revenue.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeff Gibson, Treasurer

10 Commandments of In Person Worship

When Brown County reaches Phase II of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) gating criteria, Union will resume in-person worship in the sanctuary at 10 a.m. on Sundays. The service will also be livestreamed on Facebook and YouTube. In accordance with WI DHS recommendations we will accommodate 50 people when we are in Phase II. Our goal is to do everything possible to keep everyone healthy as possible.

To help people get an idea of what worship will be like during Phase II, here are Union's Ten COVID Commandments:

- I. Attendance will be by reservation. You may make a reservation by calling the church office (920-437-9266) or click ____.
- II. Entry will be at the West Covered Entrance or the East Mayflower Doors only.
- III. All participants will undergo a health check, including having your temperature taken when you arrive. Your temperature must be 100 degrees Fahrenheit or less to enter the building.
- IV. Everyone 5 years old and older must wear a mask covering their mouth and nose at all times in the building.
- V. The elevator will be available for one passenger or one household at a time.
- VI. Pews will be blocked for safe social distancing between households.
- VII. Each household will be taken to an assigned pew; exiting will be guided as well.
- VIII. The congregation will not be singing in worship; a cantor and instrumentalists will lead us in our musical worship.
- IX. There will be no fellowship gatherings in the building before or after worship.
- X. The sanctuary will be disinfected after services.

Proposed BAPTISMAL POLICY FOR UNION CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST DURING COVID19

For Christians, celebrating new life in Christ through baptism is a central and powerful ritual of our faith. In celebrating baptism, we join with Christians across the world and across the centuries as we celebrate God's unearned grace and dedicate ourselves to the ways and teachings of Jesus Christ.

Because our tradition teaches that an all-knowing, all-loving, all-wise deity would deal compassionately and mercifully with the eternal soul of the baptized and unbaptized alike, and because the physical experience of water touching flesh is symbolic of the sacredness of our tangible existence, our church leadership will encourage members who wish to participate in this sacrament of grace and love to defer their celebration until conditions are once again safe for people to gather in close proximity to one another and to touch.

With this encouragement, if an individual or parents present extenuating circumstances, a pastoral decision, in consultation with Union's Worship Ministry, may be made to celebrate a baptism sooner.

During the COVID19 outbreak we will be following the Wisconsin DHS guidelines. While Brown County remains at a high activity level (as reported by the Wisconsin DHS), we will limit our baptismal practices in the following ways**:

Time of Service

Union continues to affirm the central importance in baptism of the Body of Christ as represented by the church community gathered. Therefore, our practice will continue to be the celebration of baptism within the context of Sunday worship.

If deemed pastorally prudent to celebrate a baptism before we return to full worship in the sanctuary, the pastor and Worship Ministry will work with families to discern the number of guests we can safely accommodate (fewer than 10 during phase 1 while worship is being recorded; during phase 2 when we are hosting 50 people or fewer in the sanctuary, a reasonable proportion of that gathering may be comprised of the baptismal guests, to be discerned). We require that all people practice social distancing of 6 feet between households, and that all over 5 years old wear masks.

The minister celebrating the sacrament will wear a mask, gloves, and a face shield, and the baptized individual will not be walked among the congregation when they are introduced.

We are not able to accommodate requests for room rentals for baptismal parties to continue their celebration at this time.

Priorities and Budget Team Proposal

Team Members: Jeff Carels, Heather Collins (Chair), Bridget Flad-Daniels, Susan Forsythe, Jeff Gibson, Betty Hartman, Barbara McClure-Lukens, Nicole Polarek, Sandy Polarek, and Ryan Rieth

The Priorities and Budget Team was formed, by Common Ministry, with the charge to provide to Common Ministry at the August 13th session, a recommendation to address the projected 2021 budget shortfall and move forward with a sustainable budget.

The principles that the team agreed to use throughout our work were:

- We will decide on specific “reforms that will change budget outcomes.”
- The strategy we recommend must include inspiring more substantial giving.
- Always keep in mind: Congregational engagement.

The team identified the following areas which might be modified to right-size the church budget:

- Building expenses
- Encourage more giving
- Staffing model
- Loan or Grant from Gifts and Memorials
- A combination of the above.

The team focused on the following tasks:

- Identified that the budget shortfall to be addressed was approximately \$80,000.
- Reviewed budget, looking for new approaches to allocate/cut funds.
- Determined that there were not significant options to reduce expenses within the building portion of the budget. This option was not deemed feasible at this time.
- A further loan or grant from Gifts and Memorials was discussed multiple times. At the time the 3 year \$150,000 grant was made, a commitment was made to the congregation that this was a one-time ask to create a spark and that it would not be an on-going ask for regular operating expenses.
- Focused, therefore, on the staffing model.
- Four sub-teams were formed to gather information to inform our decision-making.
 - Financial Secretary
 - Minister of Faith Formation and Community Outreach
 - Ministry teams engagement
 - Congregational engagement
- Identified priorities and then ranked the priorities upon the completion of the information gathering by the sub-teams and discussed how those priorities might be engaged. This task is ongoing.
- Developed a staffing model to recommend to Common Ministry.

Recommendation:

The team submits the following 4-part proposal for consideration.

1. Revise the Financial Secretary position to 8-10 hours/week and outsource payroll. This portion of the proposal was presented and approved at the July Common Ministry meeting.
2. Return the Minister of Faith Formation and Community Engagement to a half-time position. Revise the job description to focus responsibilities on Faith Formation (see attached).
3. Increase congregational giving and use some of the 2020 budget carry-over, if there is any, to address the remaining amount needed for a balanced 2021 budget. Communicate to the congregation a recommended percent pledge increase needed per giving unit to achieve a balanced budget as well as other strategies. **
4. Create a Generosity Committee to work on strategies to increase giving as a longer term initiative.

Step Impact	Budget
1. Financial Secretary CM informed and position is posted	\$ 8,000
2. Minister of Faith Formation and Community Engagement	<u>\$44,000</u>
Total Savings	\$52,000

**\$28,000 remains to meet the \$80,000 target

Approved